



# Student Achievement in South Carolina

2007 School and District Report Card Data Brief

## The rating system is built upon an aspiration that SC's student achievement is to be ranked in the top half of states nationally by 2010.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL SCHOOL AND DISTRICT RATINGS are released at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, November 15, 2007. These ratings, developed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Accountability Act of 1998, document South Carolina's efforts to improve the performance of its students and schools.

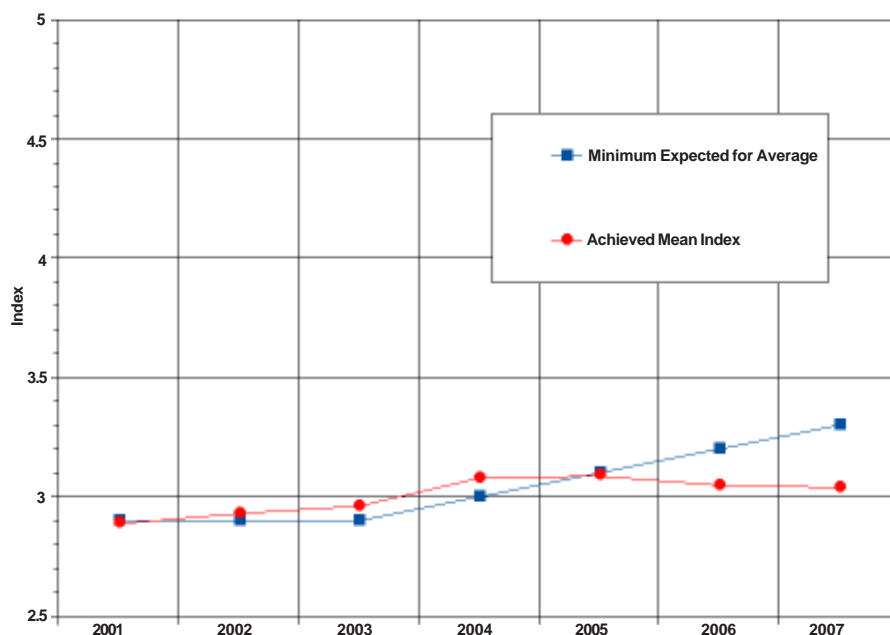
Generally, the ratings demonstrate our continuing struggle to be nationally competitive. The rating system is built upon an aspiration that South Carolina's student achievement is to be ranked in the top half of states nationally by the year 2010.

This year's performance for elementary and middle schools is influenced by declines in mathematics and English language arts as measured by the state testing program. Fifty-seven percent of schools experienced declines in PACT performance in English language arts and 42 percent experienced declines in mathematics.

At the high school level we experienced lowering of the graduation rate. This may be the result of stronger and more accurate databases. This also is the first year that end-of-course assessments are included in the high school ratings.

Educators express concern about negative perceptions of school performance resulting from the increase in expectations through 2010. The increase in expectations is structured to shift the lens through which we view our educational system from an internal, state-based focus to a national focus. It is an unsettling shift, but a necessary one if we are to rank in the top half of states.

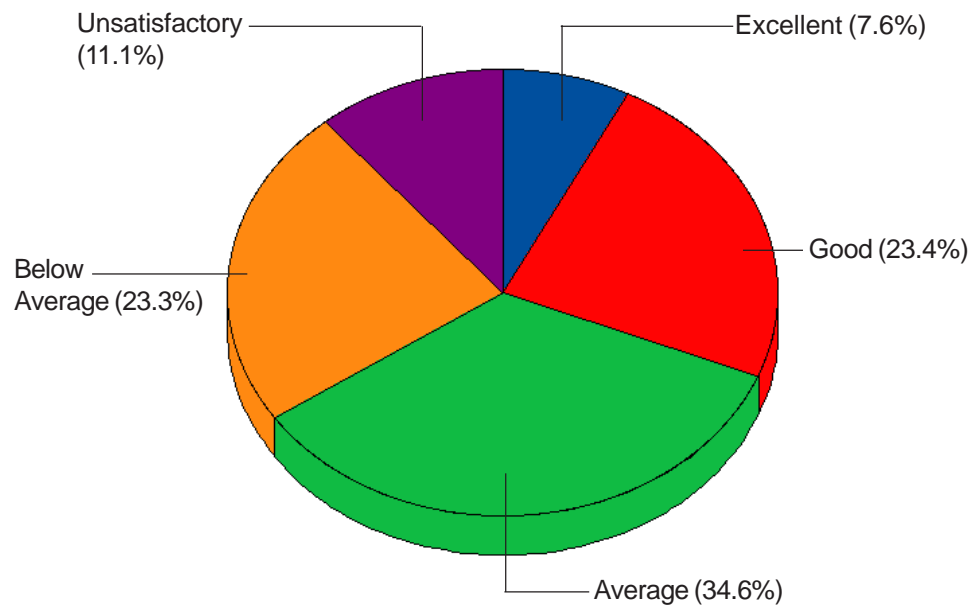
South Carolina has made strong progress, but not enough. Ten years ago we committed to comprehensive improvements and changes in South Carolina's status. Many have described it as a journey which may require decades of dedication. We do not believe it is time to step away from that journey, however difficult staying the course may be.



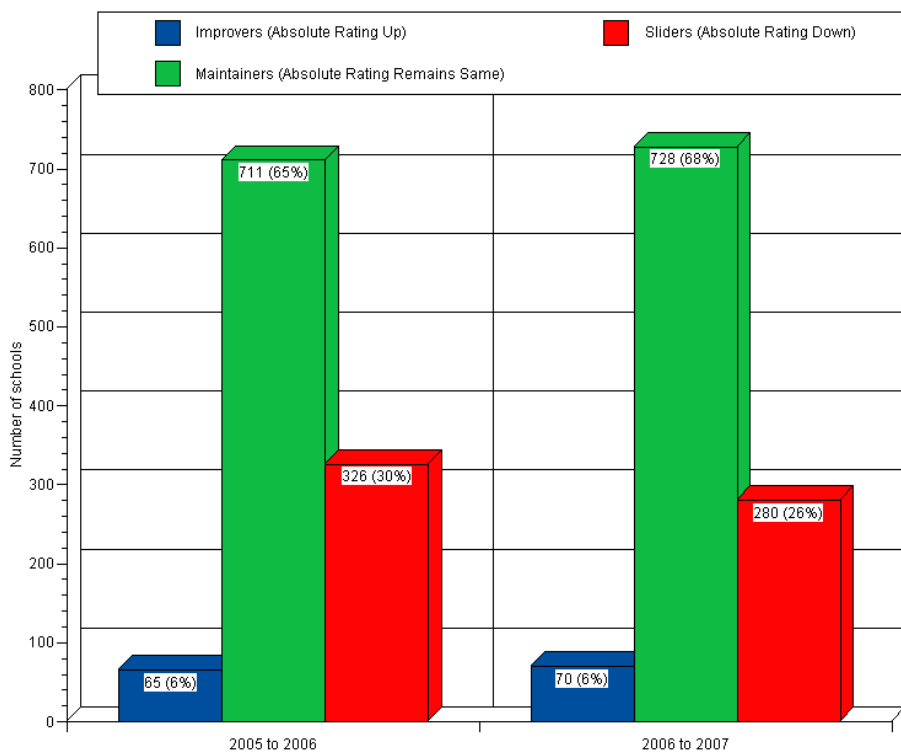
Year	Minimum Expected for Average	Achieved Mean Index
2001	2.9	2.89
2002	2.9	2.93
2003	2.9	2.96
2004	3.0	3.08
2005	3.1	3.09
2006	3.2	3.05
2007	3.3	3.04

## SC student enrollment by 2007 School Rating

Over 65% of South Carolina's students are enrolled in a school rated Average or above.



## SC Schools: "Improvers", "Maintainers", and "Sliders"



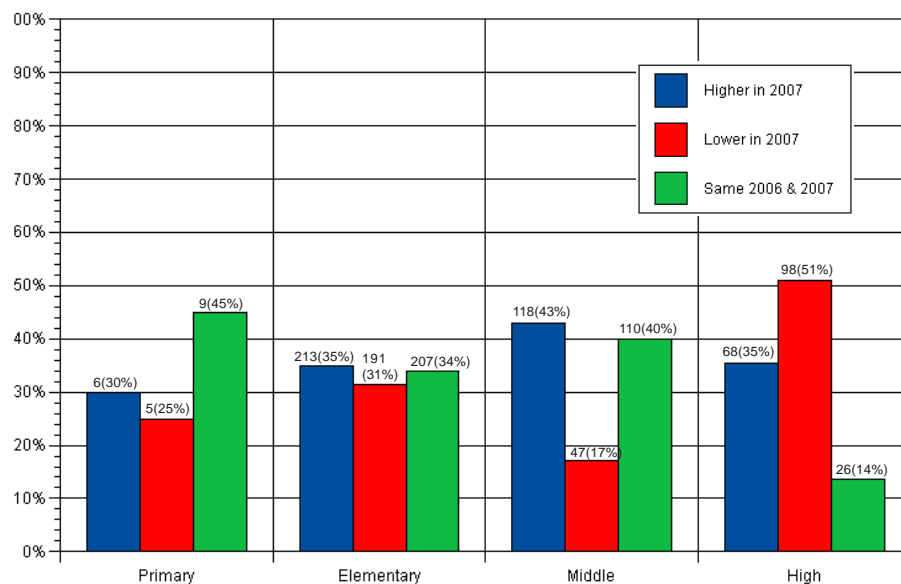
In 2007, 68 percent of schools maintained their rating.

## The indexes indicate great variation in student and school performance

**Why It Matters:** About one-third of schools earned a higher index and one-third earned a lower index. Highly effective organizations cannot succeed with this variability. Each of us, individually and collectively, must examine our work and resolve those issues that are precluding not only higher performance, but consistent performance.

**Key Findings:** Absolute indexes determine the Absolute rating for schools. Statewide, 37 percent of schools earned a higher Absolute index; 32 percent maintained the same index; and 31 percent lowered their index. In some cases, the index is higher but not high enough to earn a higher rating. A total of 213 elementary schools earned a higher index in 2007 than 2006. Additionally, 118 middle schools and 68 high schools earned a higher index.

### Comparison of Absolute Indexes in 2006 & 2007



Over 50 percent of high schools had lower absolute indexes in 2007 than 2006.

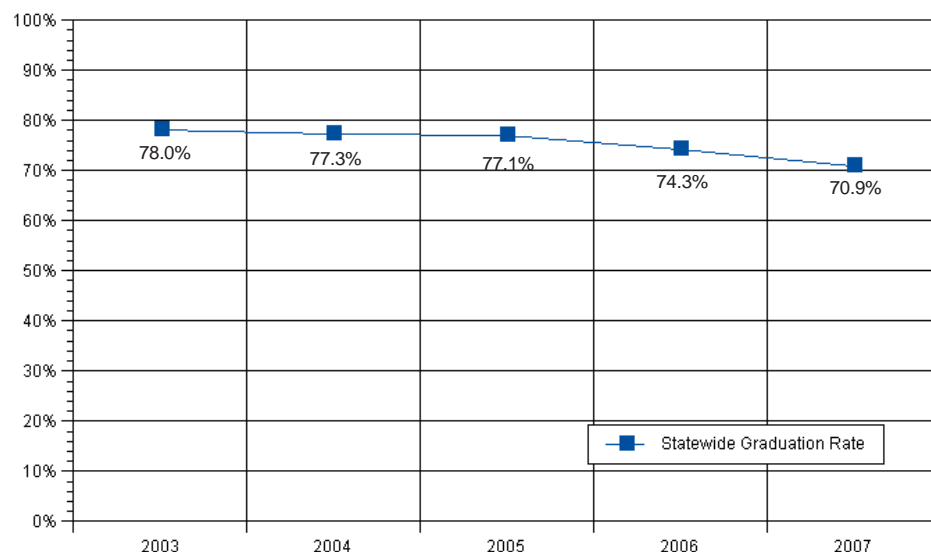
## The graduation rates decreased.

**Why It Matters:** Young people who do not complete high school are unprepared to remain competitive in a global economy and earn significantly less over their lifetimes. Studies have found that young adults with low education and skill levels are more likely to live in poverty and to receive government assistance.<sup>1</sup> High school dropouts are likely to stay on public assistance longer than those with at least a high school degree. Further, those without a high school degree are more likely to become involved in crime.<sup>2</sup>

The on-time graduation rate is the percentage of all students (including students with disabilities) enrolled for the first time in grade nine four years prior to the year of the report card who earn a standard high school diploma (not GED), adjusted for transfers in and out of school.

**Key Findings:** At the high school level, schools report lower graduation rates. This finding may be the result of stronger databases. We anticipate increasing accuracy as databases are affected by the phase-in of the unique student identifier system.

## Statewide graduation rates over time



<sup>1</sup>Source: Boisjoly, J., Harris, K., and Duncan, G., 1998. "Initial Welfare Spells: Trends, Events, and Duration," *Social Service Review*, 72 (4), 466 - 492; Moore, K., Gleib, D., Driscoll, A., Zaslow, M., and Redd, Z. (in press). "Poverty and Welfare Patterns: Implications for Children," *Journal of Social Policy*.

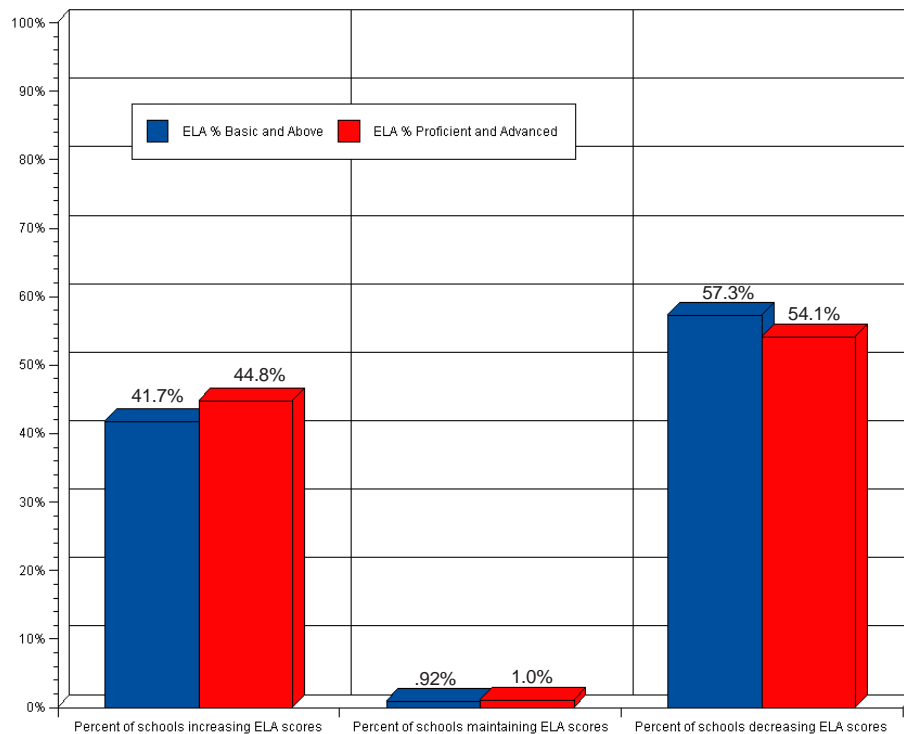
<sup>2</sup>Source: Freeman, R. (1996). "Why Do So Many Young American Men Commit Crimes and What Might We Do About It?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 10(1), 25 - 42.

## Reading remains a critical academic need area

**Why It Matters:** No content area is more fundamental to student success than reading. If a student cannot read on a proficient level in 8th grade, he only has a 50 percent likelihood of graduating from high school on-time.<sup>3</sup> Early language development is key, followed by advanced comprehension skills and analytical skills.

**Key Findings:** Although English Language Arts (ELA) PACT performance scores statewide remained fairly stable from 2006 to 2007, 57 percent of schools experienced declines in PACT performance in ELA, at the Basic and above level. At the Proficient or Advanced performance level, 54 percent of schools declined in ELA PACT performance.

### ELA PACT Performance by school, from 2006 to 2007



<sup>3</sup>Source: Miley, Harry (2003). "Executive Summary: The Relationship Between Reading Proficiency and High School Graduation Rates in South Carolina." [http://www.scpairs.org/PDF/Harry\\_Miley\\_Exec\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.scpairs.org/PDF/Harry_Miley_Exec_Summary.pdf).

## To move South Carolina, improvement must happen everywhere.

**Why It Matters:** Some schools and districts in challenging situations are succeeding. Schools in Saluda County enroll a very diverse population and experience the challenges associated with staffing rural schools. Yet, over the last five years the school district has made dramatic gains in student achievement.

Historic underachievement threatens many areas of South Carolina. Not only must we get better, we must get better at a faster rate and with young people whom we have been unsuccessful reaching historically.

**Key Findings:** Twelve percent of the students who took the PACT in 2007 were in the 13 counties around the “I-95 Corridor.” In ELA, those students account for 18 percent of the students who scored Below Basic; 11 percent of the students who scored Basic or Above; and 8 percent scoring Proficient or Advanced.

### 2007 PACT Performance by county

Subject	Performance	*13 I-95 counties (%) <sup>1</sup> [%] <sup>2</sup>	**33 non-I-95 counties (%) <sup>1</sup> [%] <sup>2</sup>	All 46 counties (%) <sup>1</sup> [%] <sup>2</sup>
ELA	Below Basic	(17.6%) [34.1%]	(82.4%) [22.2%]	(100%) [23.7%]
	Basic or Above	(10.6%) [65.9%]	(89.4%) [77.7%]	(100%) [76.3%]
	Proficient or Advanced	(8.1%) [23.4%]	(91.9%) [37.1%]	(100%) [35.4%]
ELA Number Tested		36,520 (12.2%)	262,093 (87.8%)	298,613 (100%)

Subject	Performance	13 I-95 counties (%) <sup>1</sup> [%] <sup>2</sup>	33 non-I-95 counties (%) <sup>1</sup> [%] <sup>2</sup>	All 46 counties (%) <sup>1</sup> [%] <sup>2</sup>
Math	Below Basic	(18.1%) [34.8%]	(81.9%) [22.4%]	(100%) [24.0%]
	Basic or Above	(10.6%) [65.1%]	(89.4%) [77.6%]	(100%) [76.0%]
	Proficient or Advanced	(7.9%) [20.8%]	(92.1%) [34.3%]	(100%) [32.7%]
Math Number Tested		37,958 (12.4%)	267,605 (87.6%)	305,563 (100%)

(%)<sup>1</sup> Row Percent -- Percentage of all students at performance level statewide  
[%]<sup>2</sup> Percent of County Group

\*Allendale, Bamberg, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg

\*\*Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Colleton, Dorchester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Georgetown, Greenville, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens, Lexington, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens, Richland, Saluda, Spartanburg, Sumter, Union, and York

## ABSOLUTE PERFORMANCE RATINGS 2001-2007

Absoute Rating	2007 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>*</sup>	2006 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>**</sup>	2005 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>***</sup>	2004 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>****</sup>	2003 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>*****</sup>	2002 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>*****</sup>	2001 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>*****</sup>
Excellent	71 (6.4%)	131 (11.6%)	169 (15.2%)	224 (20.4%)	217 (19.9%)	191 (18.1%)	168 (15.2%)
Good	217 (19.6%)	246 (21.8%)	304 (27.4%)	372 (33.9%)	352 (32.3%)	354 (33.5%)	326 (29.4%)
Average	371 (33.6%)	361 (32.0%)	349 (31.5%)	312 (28.5%)	324 (29.8%)	304 (28.7%)	321 (29.0%)
Below Average	290 (26.2%)	252 (22.3%)	222 (20.0%)	160 (14.6%)	150 (13.8%)	159 (15.0%)	200 (18.1%)
Unsatisfactory	156 (14.1%)	137 (12.1%)	65 (5.9%)	28 (2.6%)	46 (4.2%)	50 (4.7%)	71 (6.4%)
Total	1105 (100%)	1127 (100%)	1109 (100%)	1096 (100%)	1089 (100%)	1058 (100%)	1086 (100%)

\* Based on SDE data, November 1, 2007; totals do not include charter schools.

\*\* Based on SDE data, October 30, 2006; March 2, 2007

\*\*\* Based on SDE data, November 4, 2005

\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, October 2004

\*\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, October 2003

\*\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, October 2002

\*\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, November 2001

*Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Primary, Elementary, Middle, High). Career and Technology Centers ratings are not factored into tables. The number of schools not receiving an absolute rating are as follows: 21 in 2007; 24 in 2006; 19 in 2005; 15 in 2004; 15 in 2003; 22 in 2002; and 22 in 2001.*

## IMPROVEMENT RATINGS 2001-2007

Improvement Rating	2007 Improvement Performance Rating Number (%) <sup>*</sup>	2006 Improvement Rating Number (%) <sup>**</sup>	2005 Improvement Rating Number (%) <sup>***</sup>	2004 Improvement Rating Number (%) <sup>****</sup>	2003 Improvement Rating Number (%) <sup>*****</sup>	2002 Improvement Rating Number (%) <sup>*****</sup>	2001 Improvement Rating Number (%) <sup>*****</sup>
Excellent	46 (4.2%)	78 (7.0%)	88 (8.0%)	170 (15.8%)	75 (7.0%)	94 (8.9%)	135 (12.2%)
Good	145 (13.2%)	184 (16.5%)	198 (18.0%)	215 (20.0%)	174 (16.1%)	183 (17.4%)	168 (15.2%)
Average	101 (9.2%)	107 (9.6%)	84 (7.6%)	97 (9.0%)	89 (8.2%)	186 (17.6%)	215 (19.4%)
Below Average	332 (30.3%)	285 (25.6%)	340 (30.8%)	276 (25.8%)	275 (25.5%)	311 (29.5%)	299 (27.0%)
Unsatisfactory	473 (43.1%)	459 (41.2%)	393 (35.6%)	313 (29.2%)	466 (43.2%)	280 (26.6%)	267 (24.1%)
Total	1097 (100%)	1113 (100%)	1103 (100%)	1071 (100%)	1079 (100%)	1054 (100%)	1084 (100%)

\* Based on SDE data, November 1, 2007; totals do not include charter schools.

\*\* Based on SDE data, October 30, 2006; March 2, 2007

\*\*\* Based on SDE data, November 4, 2005

\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, October 2004

\*\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, October 2003

\*\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, October 2002

\*\*\*\*\* Based on SDE data, November 2001

*Notes: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Primary, Elementary, Middle, High). Career and Technology Centers ratings are not factored into tables. The number of schools not receiving an improvement rating are as follows: 29 in 2007; 38 in 2006; 27 in 2005; 50 in 2004; 16 in 2003; 26 in 2002; and 24 in 2001.*



## 2007 Annual School and District Ratings Discussion Points

Based on data received from SDE, November 1, 2007.

### Ratings

#### Absolute Ratings

Overall, the 2007 school ratings reveal an increase in the number of schools rated *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory*.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	71 (6%)	50 (5%)	46 (4%)	28 (3%)	65 (6%)	139 (12%)	156 (14%)
<i>Below Average</i>	200 (18%)	159 (15%)	150 (14%)	160 (15%)	222 (20%)	250 (22%)	290 (26%)

Table does not include ratings for charter schools, career and technology centers, or special schools.

There were changes to school absolute ratings from 2006 to 2007 in the following manner:

*"Improvers"*: 70 schools elevated their ratings –

- 32 of the *Improvers* are high schools, 14 are middle schools.

*"Maintainers"*: 728 schools maintained their ratings

*"Sliders"*: 280 schools lowered their ratings –  
- 80 of the *"Sliders"* are high schools.

#### South Carolina's Students – 2007

7.6% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Excellent*.

23.4% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Good*.

34.6% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Average*.

23.3% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Below Average*.

11.1% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory*.

#### District Absolute Ratings

- This year, 17 school districts are rated *Unsatisfactory*, up from 11 in 2006, 5 in 2005, and 1 in 2004.

#### Career and Technology Center Absolute Ratings

- Absolute ratings for Career and Technology Centers, as well as special and charter schools, are not included in the overall "snapshot" of the ratings. However, 82 percent of the 37 Career and Technology Centers are rated *Excellent*. One center is rated *Unsatisfactory*. No Career Centers were rated *Below Average*. Three Career Centers were not rated.

#### Charter School Absolute Ratings

- Of the 36 charter schools who will receive an Absolute rating in 2007, one school is rated *Excellent*. Seventeen of the charter schools are rated *Unsatisfactory* and six are rated *Below Average*.

#### Improvement Ratings

- There were changes to school improvement ratings from 2006 to 2007 in the following manner:
  - 286 schools elevated their rating
  - 422 schools maintained their rating
  - 363 schools earned lower improvement ratings
- The number of elementary schools with an Improvement rating of *Excellent* is 16, down from 38 in 2006. Ninety-two percent of middle schools earned an Improvement rating of *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory* in 2007, in contrast with 83 percent in 2006.

## **Student Performance**

- Flat or declining PACT scores further document lower student achievement. Performance in the middle grades (grades 6-8) is significantly lower than in the elementary grades (grades 3-5). Also, student performance in Social Studies and Science is lower than performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math.

### **2006 and 2007 PACT Performance**

	<b>Elementary (Grades 3-5) % <i>Basic or Above</i></b>		<b>Middle (Grades 6-8) % <i>Basic or Above</i></b>		<b>Elementary (Grades 3-5) % <i>Proficient or Advanced</i></b>		<b>Middle (Grades 6-8) % <i>Proficient or Advanced</i></b>	
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>ELA</b>	82.7%	82.0%	70.7%	70.7%	43.5%	43.0%	27.2%	28.0%
<b>Math</b>	78.4%	78.0%	72.9%	73.9%	36.7%	35.2%	30.1%	30.0%
<b>Science</b>	61.7%	63.0%	56.4%	62.7%	27.1%	31.1%	24.1%	30.0%
<b>Social Studies</b>	71.4%	74.1%	63.0%	66.7%	31.1%	34.0%	24.1%	25.05

*Does not include students tested off level or with PACT-Alt.*

## **Notes on Ratings Calculations**

This year, modifications were made to the calculation of the Absolute and Improvement ratings, which factor into an analysis of the ratings.

### ***On-Time Graduation Rate / End-of-Course Assessments***

- High schools experienced lowering of the graduation rate. This may be the result of stronger and more accurate databases. This also is the first year that end-of-course assessments are included in the high school ratings.

### ***Inclusion of PACT Science and Social Studies in the Ratings for Elementary and Middle Schools***

- This is the fifth year Social Studies and Science have been tested on the PACT and 2007 is the third year results have been included in the calculation of the ratings. The results were phased in over a three-year period and the weighting increased each year (5 percentage points per year) until the target weightings were achieved in school year 2006-2007. This year, Science absolute rating weights are set at 20% for elementary schools and 25% for middle schools. Social Studies absolute rating weights are set at 20% for elementary schools and 25% for middle schools.

### ***Increase in Expectations (Rigor)***

- Designed as a system to require and reward continuous improvement in South Carolina's public schools, the rigor of the absolute performance ratings increased last year by one-tenth of a point on a five-point scale. This year, the rigor increased an additional one-tenth of a point.
- Our analysis shows that the increase in the rigor only affected 66 schools, meaning six percent of schools were "caught in the rigor." The 2007 statewide average index is 3.04, which establishes an Absolute rating of *Average*.

## **Confronting Poverty**

*Note: Numbers of schools will vary within data sets. Data provided from the SC Office of Research and Statistics includes information from schools that may not have received a report card or received more than one report card, depending on their school structure.*

### **Poverty and Absolute Ratings**

- Significant poverty exists in the majority of South Carolina schools. Only 6% of schools have fewer than one-third of their students living in poverty (64 of 1106 schools).
- Only 54 schools (5%) serve a population of 30% poverty or less.
- Of 1077 schools which had poverty indexes in both 2006 and 2007, 737 (68.1%) showed an increase in the poverty index.
- Over half (53%) of all South Carolina schools have at least 70% of their students living in poverty in 2007 and 2006. This percentage has increased from 2005, when 50% of all schools were affected. In 2004, 48% were affected.
- Almost one out of 5 schools (20.5%) serves a population of students in very high poverty (90% or more.)

<b>2007 Absolute Rating</b>	<b>Average Poverty Index</b>
Excellent	46.2% (n=71)
Good	52.8% (n=217)
Average	67.5% (n=371)
Below Average	81.5% (n=289)
Unsatisfactory	90.6% (n=154)

### **2007 School Ratings Poverty Levels Across Primary, Elementary, Middle, and High Schools Report Cards**

	<b>Extent of Poverty (Poverty Index)</b>		
	<b>High Poverty (70%+)</b>	<b>Very High Poverty (80%+)</b>	<b>Extreme Poverty (90%+)</b>
Total Number of Report Cards (% of 1128 Report Cards in 2007, 1106 in 2006)	2007: 601 (53.3%) 2006: 599 (54.2%)	2007: 421 (37.3%) 2006: 402 (36.3%)	2007: 228 (20.2%) 2006: 215 (19.4%)
Number of Report Cards with <i>Excellent</i> or <i>Good</i> Absolute Ratings in 2007	2007: 49 (8.2%) 2006: 76 (12.7%)	2007: 24 (5.7%) 2006: 36 (9.0%)	2007: 10 (4.4%) 2006: 14 (6.5%)

### **Poverty by Organizational Level – Absolute Ratings**

Primary and elementary schools constitute a disproportionately-larger percentage of those schools with extreme poverty rates. Primary and elementary schools represent 56.8% of all schools, but 69.9% of schools with a Poverty Index of 90% or greater.

#### **Elementary**

- 1.8% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, down from 2.5% in 2006. 2.5% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

#### **Middle Schools**

- Poverty presents a great challenge for middle schools. In 2007, no middle schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good* while 97.9% of these schools earned an absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory* or *Below Average*.

### High Schools

- 13.7% of high schools with a poverty level of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, down from 14.6% in 2006.

### **Poverty by Organizational Level – Improvement Ratings**

Eighteen percent of schools with a poverty index of 70% or greater have improvement ratings of *Excellent* or *Good*.

Sixteen percent of all schools (primary, elementary, middle, and high) with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, while 18 percent of schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, and 18 percent of schools with a poverty index of 70% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

<b>2007 Improvement Rating</b>	<b>Average Poverty Index</b>
Excellent	67.3% (n=49)
Good	65.9% (n=148)
Average	65.0% (n=104)
Below Average	69.7% (n=337)
Unsatisfactory	73.2% (n=489)